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WHO IS OUTDATED?



GERMAN SOCIALISTS ECHO SWATANTRA



Swatantra Party

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GERMAN SOCIALISTS ECHO SWATANTRA

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU has on more than one occasion characterised the principles of the Swatantra Party as outdated and belonging to the past century. Pandit Nehru is a socialist. So are members of the Praja Socialist Party. It may interest those who call themselves socialists in India to know how badly they lag behind some of their brethren abroad in their thinking these days.

The Swatantra Party published its Statement of Principles in Madras on June 4 and this statement was revised and adopted at the Preparatory Convention of the Party in Bombay on August 1 and 2, 1959.

The Socialist Party in West Germany, which is called the Social Democratic Party of Germany, is one of the leading parties in the Socialist International to which the British Labour Party and the P.S.P. belong. In October 1959, the Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party of Germany published the draft of the New Socialist Programme. This document makes startling reading. It would be no exaggeration to say that the German socialists have decided that the time has come to throw overboard lock, stock and barrel the entire methodology of State Socialism to which Pandit Nehru and the Indian socialists still cling.

In order to facilitate an appreciation of the highlights of the new socialist programme in

Germany and make it easy for readers to compare this programme on relevant points with that of the Swatantra Party published earlier, extracts from the two documents are published below on facing pages.

The Swatantra Party does *not* claim that the German Social Democrats have read and copied the Swatantra Party programme. They are happy, however, that the keen intelligence of the German socialists has shown a similar perception to that of the founders of the Swatantra Party a few months earlier. In the light of these developments, the question arises: Who is outdated—the Swatantra Party or Pandit Nehru and his supporters?

Let each reader judge for himself.

I—General Principles

Swatantra Party

1. The Swatantra Party is pledged to social Justice and equality of opportunity for all people without distinction of religion, caste, occupation, or political affiliation.

The Party holds that, in the policies adopted for national development, priority must be assigned to the basic needs of the people, namely, food, water, housing and clothing.

2. The Party holds that the progress, welfare and happiness of the people depend on individual initiative, enterprise and energy. The Party stands for the principle of maximum freedom for the individual and minimum interference by the State, consistent with the obligation to prevent and punish anti-social activities, to protect the weaker elements of society, and to create the conditions in which individual initiative will thrive and be fruitful. The Party is, therefore, opposed to increasing State interference of the kind now being pursued.

3. The Party holds that a sense of stability and incentive for individual effort can be restored only by strict adherence to the Fundamental Rights and guarantees specified in the Constitution as originally adopted in respect of freedom of property, trade, and occupation, and just compensation for any property compulsorily acquired by the State for public purposes.

4. The Party holds that the State should foster and utilise the sense of moral obligation, the pride, satisfaction, and fulfilment felt by individuals in serving others which are inherent in our tradition, instead of adopting legislative or other forms of compulsion which commence with want of faith in the people

I—General Principles

German Social Democratic Party

1. The aim of Socialist economic policies is the constant growth of wealth, a life in freedom and without dependence and exploitation as well as fair shares for all in growing expansion.

2. Socialists are striving for a society in which the individual can live in freedom, responsible to the community and in which he can determine the political, economic and cultural shape of his existence with the help of others.

The life of man, his dignity and his conscience come before the State.

3. It is up to the State to protect freedom of belief and conscience. The State must help all men to develop their personal responsibilities freely. Fundamental Rights should not only protect the freedom of the individual against the State, they should also help to form the community and the basis of the State.

Those who own means of production have a right to be protected by society as long as their property does not hinder the development of a just social order.

The S.D.P. aims at creating conditions in which all men can freely decide to accrue property from their own rising incomes.

4. Democracy and freedom demand that a growing number of people develop their social awareness and prepare themselves to share the responsibilities of social life. This awareness must be roused and strengthened.

Every dictatorship, every form of totalitarian or authoritarian rule is rejected, because these

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and are consummated in the serfdom of the governed under the official machine in an omnipotent State controlled by a political party voted to power.

5. The Party stands for every effort being made to foster and maintain spiritual values, and preserve what is good in our culture and tradition.

II—Agriculture

6. The Party holds that the paramount need is for increasing food production and that this is best attained through the self-employed peasant proprietor who is interested in obtaining the highest yield from his land. . . .

The Party believes in an intensive programme of agricultural improvement by promoting the material and psychological inducements for greater production without disturbing the harmony or rural life. The Party holds that there should be no disturbance of ownership, management and cultivation of land, but believes in a more effective programme than is being followed at present in respect of irrigation, and the supply of material, implements, credit and marketing facilities.

III—Industry

7. The Party believes that, in the field of production, the free choice of the producer and the consumer must be given basic place and importance.

In industry, the Party believes in the incentives for higher production and expansion inherent in competitive enterprise,

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systems disregard the dignity of man, extinguish his freedom and destroy the rule of law. Socialism is realised only through Democracy, and Democracy fulfilled only through Socialism. Communists have no right to invoke Socialist traditions.

5. Democratic socialism..... in Europe is rooted in Christian ethics, humanism and classical philosophy.... out of respect for man's decisions in these matters of conscience in which neither the State nor a political party are allowed to interfere.

Socialism is no substitute for religion. The Social Democratic Party respects churches and religious societies. It affirms their public and legal status and their special mission and independence.

II—Agriculture

6. The farmer is entitled to own land. Efficient family farms should be protected by modern land and lease laws.

State and society must support the family, protect and strengthen it. By supporting the material security of the family, society recognises its moral value.

III—Industry

7. The free choice of consumer goods and services, free choice of a place to work, free initiative for employers are decisive foundations and free competition an important element of a free economic policy.... Totalitarian control of the economy destroys freedom. The Social Democratic Party therefore

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with adequate safeguards for the protection of labour and against unreasonable profits, prices and dividends, where there is no competition or where competition does not secure the necessary corrective.

8. The Party stands for the restriction of State enterprise to heavy industries such as are necessary to supplement private enterprise in that field, such national services as Railways, and the starting of new enterprises which are difficult for private initiative.

9. The Party believes that the State will best serve the nation by encouraging and affording facilities for a decentralised distribution of industry and by limiting its own regulatory function to the prevention and punishment of anti-social activities wherever called for.

IV—Labour

10. The Party stands for a fair deal for labour, whether in the field, factory or office and for correlating wages to increased productivity and for the workers' right to organise for the purpose of collective bargaining. It stands for harmonising the interests of capital and labour when they get into conflict.

V—Education

11. The Party believes that every citizen has a fundamental right to educate his children according to his choice and in a free atmosphere untrammelled by official directives and that the State should afford facilities for such education without discrimination.

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favours a free market, wherever free competition really exists. Where markets come under the domination of individuals or groups, however, manifold measures are necessary to preserve the freedom of the economy. As much competition as possible—as much planning as necessary.

8. They (public enterprises) become a necessity where for natural or technical reasons indispensable functions can only be carried out by excluding competition in the interest of the public and according to economic commonsense.

9. Every conglomeration of economic power even in the hands of the State harbours a danger. This is why public property should be ordered according to the principles of self-administration and decentralisation.... Not centralised bureaucracy, but the responsible co-operation of all participants best serves the interests of the community.

IV—Labour

10. All wage and salary earners and civil servants have the right to free association in trade union (4.2).

V—Education

11. The voice of parents in the education of their children and self-administrative functions of students should be further developed everywhere.

All privileges in the access to educational institutions must be removed.....

The freedom and independence of universities must remain untouched.

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